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SOURCE Die Burger.COMPARISON OF RACIAL PROBLEMS IN US AND UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

Comment: In its issue of 24 December 1952, Die Burger, Cape-town pro-government daily, commented editorially on the appointment of Dr Ralph Bunche as head of the UN commission to investigate minority racial policies in the Union of South Africa. The editorial indicates that Dr Bunche's experience with the Negro problem in the US does not necessarily qualify him to solve the racial problems in the Union of South Africa. An abstract of the editorial follows.]

The appointment of a world-famed American Negro [Dr Ralph Bunche], to head the UN's "illegal" commission on segregation, calls attention to a fact which cannot be sufficiently emphasized, namely, that the color problem in the US, despite many outward resemblances, differs substantially and fundamentally from that in the Union of South Africa.

Negroes in the US represent less than one tenth of the national population, and the percentage is not likely to increase. Confronted with the problem of how to handle this underprivileged minority, the US has embarked on a policy, at least in theory, of total equality and complete integration, although this does not necessarily mean the admixture of races. In addition, many white organizations and most churches propagate in favor of equality.

Of course, the practice is far removed from the policy, particularly in the southern states, where the percentage of Negroes is much higher than the national 10 percent. The policy there is still strict separation, as we know it in the Union of South Africa.

Separation of living quarters, of schools, of travel accommodations, and of churches, unequal treatment of all kinds, and laws against miscegenation, are not only prevalent but widespread, affecting 10 million Negroes throughout the US. Even in Washington, the US capital, segregation restrictions are such that Dr Bunche feels himself unwelcome there. These facts clash with the accepted aim of an integrated US nation, and although much has been done recently to change the segregation pattern, there is still continual and violent [white] resistance.

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The most striking difference between the Negro problem in the US and in the Union of South Africa is the numerical proportion between the two races. The whites in South Africa are a minority of approximately one to four.

Dr Ben J. Marais recently stated that on a purely proportionate basis, we would have to multiply the US Negro population by 40 to compare the problem there with our own. However, human problems are not subject to mathematical treatment, and the multiplication of the US problem by 40 does not make it merely 40 times more difficult but changes its entire nature. If 500 million Negresses instead of 14 million lived among 140 million American whites, it is doubtful if any policy of integration would have emerged in the US.

The racial problems in the US and in the Union of South Africa, while rightfully termed "color" problems, are essentially different. The white majority in the US must integrate satisfactorily a nonwhite minority by means of a unified nation. The white minority in the Union of South Africa must lead a nonwhite majority on the path to independent development, without endangering its own existence and thereby that of the Union of South Africa itself. It is, therefore, useless and misleading to seek guidance from the US for proper comprehension of this position.

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